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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 001681

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. NEULING  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE  
AFR/SA FOR E. LOKEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2010  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)  
SUBJECT: ZANU-PF CONFERENCE ATTACKS PARTY/GOZ OFFICIALS,  
PROFITEERS, NGOS, MDC, UN

REF: (A) HARARE 1680 (B) HARARE 1679 (C) HARARE 1674  
(D) HARARE 1663

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

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Summary  
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[11.](#) (U) At the ZANU-PF annual national conference held in Esigodini December 9-10, President Mugabe conceded significant problems in agrarian reform, which he attributed in part to misallocation among ruling party officials and poor planning by the government. The party reportedly adopted a report that recommended "stern" (but yet unspecified) action against NGOs and civic groups allied to the opposition. Mugabe also vilified UN Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland for expressions of concern about Zimbabwe's humanitarian situation in the wake of his recent visit to Zimbabwe (ref D). In a departure from custom, the Embassy was not invited to attend the conference's open sessions. End summary.

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Officials to Blame for Ag Problems  
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[12.](#) (U) According to press reports, Mugabe told the conference on December 9 that debate over problems with the country's agrarian reform was a central focus for the party. Problems included under-utilization of land by land reform beneficiaries, many of them party elites with multiple farms. He also charged party and government officials with colluding to support white farmers who were unwilling to give way to landless blacks. Citing "serious shortcomings in government planning", Mugabe blamed GOZ officials for inadequate agricultural inputs and a lack of technical support for farmers. Acknowledging "corruption, irregularities, and favoritism" in the distribution of land, he added that his office would now be in charge of all distribution.

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Protecting Against Profiteers  
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[13.](#) (U) Addressing the economy more broadly, Mugabe bemoaned a wide gap between party resolutions and implementation. According to the state media, in an address to the Central Committee at the conference, Mugabe blasted party members, "including some of our leaders", for involvement in black market and illicit foreign currency dealings and pledged that they would be dealt with. He further blamed the manufacturing sector for "insensitive price increases" that fueled inflation and promised to "protect the people against profiteering" by regulating prices of essential commodities. (Comment: His pledge undermines business confidence engendered by Finance Minister Murerwa's recent undertaking to lift price controls, a measure that so far has been largely implemented. End comment.)

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Anti-NGO, Anti-Opposition Diatribe  
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[14.](#) (U) On December 10, the conference reportedly adopted a Central Committee report that recommended action against NGOs perceived as allied to the opposition. According to press reporting, the Central Committee report stated that "the opposition is grouped in the form of NGOs and civic groups, all sponsored by the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. Stern action shall be taken against them." The report did not specify what action would be taken. An additional resolution urged the GOZ to follow through with plans to seize the passports of people "who go around demonizing the country" (ref B). According to the GOZ-controlled Herald's special insert on the conference, the President devoted considerable rhetoric to familiar characterizations of the MDC as British lackeys, and highlighted MDC infighting and ineffectiveness in the Senate

elections.

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Vitriol for Egeland  
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15. (U) Mugabe reserved his most vitriolic attacks for Egeland. At the conference's opening session, he claimed that Egeland had voiced solidarity with "the fight we were waging" during his visit before warning publicly about the humanitarian crisis's severity and later saying "nasty things about us." Casting Egeland as a "damn hypocrite and a liar", Mugabe said he no longer trusted the UN Secretary-General's office and would tell SYG Annan "not to send men or women who are not his own but the agents of the British." According to a party statement released December 10, the conference adopted a resolution urging the government "to re-think its position on entertaining any future UN envoys sent into the country as clandestine and insidious agents of the British and other Western countries in pursuance of their hidden agenda of regime change in Zimbabwe."

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Comment  
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16. (C) Mugabe and his party's lashing out at contrived arch-villains - the MDC, NGOs, the private sector and, the most recent additions, UN envoys - is vintage posturing that has become ritualistic. As long as Mugabe retains his perch on top, however, it poisons the environment for a majority of Zimbabweans, including many in the ruling party, who do not want to see GOZ policies further divorce the country from the international community and the UN.

17. (C) Also familiar is the disingenuous "wea culpa" in which the leadership acknowledges "mistakes" and a "few bad apples" with a promise for remedial action. At the party conference two years ago, Mugabe wagged his finger at "self-seeking" party principals, warning that nobody was above the party. Within two months, two central committee members were in jail, including Mugabe's own relative, Philip Chiyangwa, for purported economic crimes, and the party descended into a period of deepening fear and loathing from which it has yet to emerge. In that vein, we expect there will be some economic policy scapegoats identified and examples made in the coming months, likely triggering a cabinet reshuffle with some less-than-decisive implications for post-succession positioning. Bloodletting in any vent is unlikely to threaten the Mujuru/Zezuru clique's ascendancy. Moreover, no new combination of cabinet or politburo seating is likely to yield meaningful political or economic reform as long as Mugabe remains in place.

18. (C) What may be different about this conference is the extent to which the party is publicly and privately having to contend with its own profound economic policy failures. In large part due to the intensity of public reaction to the Ambassador's Mutare speech last month, the terms of public policy debate here have shifted from political to economic. Long comfortable with a political vocabulary (human rights, democracy) it had twisted to "nationalistic" advantage with domestic and regional audiences, Mugabe's party has been unable to articulate economic themes that resonate with anybody. Even more significantly, it has no strategy for avoiding the looming economic wreck, except the now patently failed and exposed approach of blaming external factors and desperately seeking a foreign savior to offer easy money. Unfortunately for Mugabe and Co., Santa Claus seems disinclined to visit Zimbabwe at this time.  
DELL